

swingin' friends!

: al cohn
 : zoot sims (AN EXCLUSIVE COLPIX RECORDING ARTIST)
 : clark terry
 : john bunch
 : jimmy knepper
 : snooky young
 : sol gubin

ARRANGED AND CONDUCTED BY

gene roland

Brunswick
RECORDS

Swingin' friends

Gene Roland, arranger and conductor
Clark Terry, trumpet
Snooky Young, trumpet
Jimmy Knepper, trombone
Al Cohn, tenor saxophone
Zoot Sims, tenor saxophone
John Bunch, piano
John Beal, bass
Sol Gubin, drums

The instrumentation of the group heard here is unusual in a period when trios, quartets and quintets tend to dominate jazz. True, five horns and three rhythm do not a big band make, but, given this standard of musicianship and Gene Roland's brilliant arranging, they frequently sound like one.

Gene Roland is well equipped to write for jazz groups of any size, but his considerable experience with big bands has obviously given him an ear for those textures which are impossible to the small combinations so common today. In fact, his adroit groupings of the available instruments are very largely responsible for the freshness and tonal variety of this album. There are plenty of solos by the "swingin' friends" but they are enframended and supported by the ensemble in a way that is something of a lost art.

Like many other arrangers who have contributed to the success of bands and bandleaders, Roland is by no means as well known as he deserves to be. After majoring in music at North Texas State, where his companions included Jimmy Giuffre and Herb Ellis, he spent two years in the Air Force, mostly with the Eighth Air Force Band. His professional career began publicly in 1944, when he joined Stan Kenton. Subsequent engagements, either playing trumpet, trombone or piano, or arranging, were with Lionel Hampton, Lucky Millinder, Vido Musso, Georgie Auld, Count Basie, Charlie Barnet, Ralph Marterie and Woody Herman. In between, he periodically returned to Stan Kenton, for whom he has written a great number of arrangements that variously incorporate five trumpets, five trombones and the famous section of mellophoniums, in which Gene himself played. He also arranged for Artie Shaw and Claude Thornhill, and on several occasions organized groups of his own, an experimental band of nearly thirty pieces in 1950 including Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, Jimmy Knepper, Charlie Parker, Al Cohn, Zoot Sims and Gerry Mulligan. The famous tenor-saxophone sound of the Four Brothers was virtually his invention. As he told Bill Coss in a "Down Beat" story (August 29th, 1963), he formed a band with four tenor saxophonists in New York in 1946. They included Al Cohn and Zoot Sims, who later joined Jimmy Giuffre and Herbie Steward in Vido Musso's big

band on the West Coast when Gene began writing for it. The emphasis on original instrumentation, as in this album, has also been evident since 1953 in the scores he has written for Dan Terry's big bands, the most recent including four soprano saxophones.

The bonds of friendship that give this set a special cachet are many and various. That between Al Cohn and Zoot Sims is one Gene especially savors, for he remembers when Al was known as "the Zoot Sims of New York" and Zoot as "the Al Cohn of Los Angeles." Clark Terry and Snooky Young both play trumpet in the NBC studio orchestra and are close friends. They came up through the big bands, Snooky in Lunceford's and Basie's, and Clark in Basie's and Ellington's. Clark is the more famous, but both are highly esteemed within the profession. Gene first met Snooky in 1941 when the latter was on the West Coast with Lunceford, and again a few years later when he was with Basie, for whom Gene wrote such numbers as "Bill's Mill." Jimmy Knepper he has known since 1945 in Los Angeles, when the trombonist was an avid Charlie Parker fan. Jimmy's efforts to play like Bird, in Gene's opinion, had a lot to do with the development of his exceptional technique. Pianist John Bunch's musical career was interrupted by World War II and he did not return to music until 1956, when he joined Woody Herman. Since that time, his reputation as both pianist and arranger has steadily grown. He has worked in big bands and little groups, with Maynard Ferguson and Benny Goodman, and with the latter he made the famous Russian tour for the State Department. His solos and accompaniment here are consistently fresh and tasteful.

The other two members of the rhythm section, as their playing shows, are thoroughly experienced musicians, although perhaps not so familiar by name to the jazz audience. Bassist John Beal was born on December 15th, 1935, and played his first professional engagement when he was seventeen. He worked with Charlie Ventura and Woody Herman before taking his master's degree at Juilliard in 1961, since when he has largely concentrated on studio work. He names Charles Mingus and Percy Heath as amongst his first major jazz influences. Sol Gubin was born in Atlantic City on July 11th, 1928, and is basically a big-band drummer. Besides working with Stan Kenton, Hal McIntyre, Tex Beneke and Sonny Dunham, he has traveled and played with singers like Patti Page, Frank Sinatra and Martha Raye. For most of the past decade, however, he has freelanced in the New York studios. "I've admired several different drummers," he says, "but I can't say that any one of them inspired me more than another. I play the way I feel!"

The well-varied program opens with a version of "Bottoms Up" that features Jimmy Knepper and Clark Terry, with the two tenors sounding, in Gene's words, "like a

section." "Suzie's Theme" is a showcase for Al Cohn, the oneness of the two trumpets being impressive here. "A Stranger in Town," as portrayed by Jimmy Knepper's skill and feeling, is a strikingly evocative performance. "Foofnik," a Roland original, has excellent solos by Snooky Young and Al Cohn. "The Great Lie," was written by another friend of Gene's, the late Andy Gibson. Originally performed by the Cab Calloway and Charlie Barnet bands, it becomes an attractive vehicle here for improvisation by Zoot Sims.

"The Wrong Blues," which opens the second side, is notable for its melancholy mood and the contributions of Jimmy Knepper and John Bunch. Al Cohn is the soloist on "The Gold Dust Twins" and Clark Terry, with a refreshing assist from John Bunch, interprets Thelonious Monk's "Round Midnight" anew. Both tenors are featured on "Soft Winds." "Al has the heavier sound," Gene Roland says, "Zoot the more pixieish conception." They split four choruses, Zoot taking the first and third, Al the second and fourth. The old Benny Goodman success, "A Smooth One," is taken at a rather brighter tempo than usual, with good results. Zoot Sims is the soloist in this swingin' finale to a swingin' set by the swingin' friends.

STANLEY DANCE.

Zoot Sims appears through the courtesy of Colpix Records.

Music Supervision: Henry Jerome
 Produced by: Harry Goodman
 Recording Engineer: Rudy May
 Edited by: Ed Remusat
 Recorded At: Decca Studio A
 Recorded On: May 23, 24, 1963

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SWINGIN' FRIENDS

GENE ROLAND - AL COHN - ZOOT SIMS* -
CLARK TERRY - JOHN BUNCH - JIMMY KNEPPER -
SNOOKY YOUNG - SOL GUBIN



Side 1
BL 54114
MG 9098

LONG PLAY 33 1/3

MG 9098 T2

1. BOTTOMS UP
2. SUZIE'S THEME
3. A STRANGER IN TOWN
4. FOOFNIK
5. THE GREAT LIE

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SWINGIN' FRIENDS

GENE ROLAND - AL COHN - ZOOT SIMS* -
CLARK TERRY - JOHN BUNCH - JIMMY KNEPPER -
SNOOKY YOUNG - SOL GUBIN



Side 2
RC 54114
MG 9099

LONG PLAY 33 1/3

- 1. THE WRONG BLUES
- 2. THE GOLD DUST TWINS
- 3. 'ROUND MIDNIGHT
- 4. SOFT WINDS
- 5. A SMOOTH ONE

*Courtesy Of Colpix Records

MG 9099T2